

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 649

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SUVA

CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI

CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, PP

SUBJ: SOLOMON ISLAND CHIEF MINISTER DISAPPOINTED WITH SOUTH
PACIFIC FORUM

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CINCPACREP PLEASE PASS TO STATUS LNO SAIPAN

1. SOLOMON MAMALONI, SOLOMON ISLANDS CHIEF MINISTER, EXPRESSED
DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM WHICH MET LAST
WEEK ON TONGA. MAMALONI ATTENDED AS AN OBSERVER, BUT SAID HIS
COUNTRY WOULD PROBABLY NOT JOIN THE FORUM UNLESS ITS AIMS
WERE CLEARLY STATED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC
COMMISSION. THE SOLOMONS NEWS DRUM AND PNG POST COURIER BOTH
CARRIED STORIES REPORTING MAMALONI'S DISENCHANTMENT WITH
THE FORUM.

2. MAJOR CRITICISM WAS DIRECTED TO THE FORUM'S PREOCCUPATION
WITH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC BUREAU OF ECONOMICS
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(SPEC) LEAVING LITTLE TIME FOR POLITICAL TOPICS. MAMALONI SAID

HE UNDERSTOOD THE FORUM WAS TO "ACT AS A KIND OF UNITED NATIONS FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC," BUT THAT IN REALITY IT DID NOT. MAMALONI WARNED DELEGATES AT THE MEETING AGAINST TRYING TO "GO IT ALONE." HE SAID THAT SOME OF THE LARGER NATIONS WERE TURNING AWAY FROM THE PACIFIC WHICH WAS APPARENTLY THE RESULT OF STRONGER FORCES AND "SEDUCTIVE INFLUENCES" FROM OUTSIDE THE PACIFIC. MAMALONI SAID THE SMALLER AND POORER NEIGHBORS IN THE PACIFIC REGION WOULD SUFFER FROM FOREIGN EXPLOITATION UNLESS ALL THE ISLAND NATIONS BANDED TOGETHER INTO AN INFLUENTIAL BLOCK. HE SAID THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH COMPROMISE AND MUTUAL RESPECT AND "WITH THE REALIZATION THAT TERRITORIES, IRRESPECTIVE OF STATUS, ETHNIC CONTRAST, GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND NATIONALITY WERE COMPATIBLE."

3. THE CHIEF MINISTER ALSO PRESSED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRM REGIONAL TRADE AND MARKETING AND GREATLY IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN SHIPPING AND AIRWAYS, IN THE PACIFIC.

4. COMMENT: MAMALONI APPARENTLY BELIEVES THERE IS CONSIDERABLE OVERLAP BETWEEN THE FORUM AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION. AS THE LEADER OF A SMALL, POOR COUNTRY, HE IS HOPING FOR HELP FROM HIS LARGER, WEALTHIER NEIGHBORS. HE IS ALSO KEENLY AWARE OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS AND THE NEED FOR THEM TO STAND TOGETHER BOTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IF THEY ARE TO BECOME TRULY INDEPENDENT IN THE POST-COLONIAL PERIOD. SOME OF HIS REFERENCES TO COUNTRIES TURNING AWAY FROM THE PACIFIC MAY BE DIRECTED TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA WHICH, AS THE LARGEST AND RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC (OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND), COULD BE A DECISIVE INFLUENCE FOR UNITY. MAMALONI MAY FEAR THAT THE GPNG PREFERS TO "GO IT ALONE" OR GIVE ONLY TOKEN SUPPORT TO SOUTH PACIFIC SOLIDARITY. WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF PNG, THE SOLOMON ISLANDS WILL FIND ITSELF AS ISOLATED AS OTHER ISLAND NATIONS IN THE REGION AND IT IS THIS WHICH MAMALONI SEEKS TO AVOID. END COMMENT.
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